



COVID-19 ESSENTIAL Healthcare Worker on Passive Monitoring – Leaflet for returning to work prior to the end of the monitoring period V5.0, 28th Aug 2020

What is an Essential Healthcare Worker (HCW)?

When a service cannot be staffed safely or a critical skill set to provide critical/essential services is unavailable, then derogation from management may be given to a HCW who has been excluded from work. This HCW is deemed an essential HCW, for the purposes of this process. The decision for the HCW to return to work lies with management. **If you have respiratory symptoms but do not fit the COVID 19 criteria for testing, you would normally be advised to self-isolate 14 days from the onset of symptoms, the last 5 days of which they should be without fever. However, with derogation from your manager you can return once you are symptom free for 48 hours, under 'Passive Monitoring'.**

What is passive monitoring?

Passive monitoring is where you self-monitor for respiratory symptoms such as COVID-19, such as **Fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, runny nose, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste.** You must carry a face mask with you at all times. Please consider a location(s) in the workplace that you may self-isolate if you become symptomatic.

The aim of this monitoring is to identify HCWs that develop symptoms consistent with Covid-19 at the earliest opportunity, to help prevent the further spread of the virus to family, friends and colleagues and to fast track symptomatic HCWs to the appropriate medical facility for further assessment, appropriate isolation and treatment if necessary.

If you develop potential symptoms

Isolate yourself from others (for example go to an empty office).

- Do not attend your Occupational Health Service or GP, including their out-of-hours/on-call service.
- Do not attend your local Emergency Department unless told to do so Occupational Health, or your GP.
- You should phone the **Occupational Health Service (see below link for contact numbers)** and advise you are self-monitoring and now have symptoms. If acutely unwell you should phone your local GP service or, if necessary, the ambulance service. (Please check local GP out of hours contact details and add below).
- If in the workplace, please self-isolate, inform your manager and they will assist in making contact with the Occupational Health service or if in a hospital setting, the Emergency Department to arrange testing if possible.

Other than attending work you must continue to self-isolate

This means:

- leaving home only to travel to and from work, to travel directly between work and home, without diversion.
- staying at home when not at work.
- You should follow the patient information sheet for information on self-isolation. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a->

These restrictions can be a source of stress for some people. There are many things that may help you cope better with the period of monitoring:

- **Set goals:** Setting goals and achieving them can give you a sense of control. The goals must be realistic in the given circumstances and could include writing a diary or learning new skills.
- **Keep active:** Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, develop mind games to stimulate thinking, for example, remember the plots of movies or passages from books. The possibilities are unlimited.
- **Look for or inject humour into the situation:** Even smiling and laughing inwardly can provide relief from anxiety and frustration.
- **Eat sufficiently and exercise as much as possible:** This will help keep the body strong and counteracts the physical effects of stress.
- **Actively use stress management techniques:** Physical relaxation techniques can reduce stress levels and are useful methods to manage pain and emotional turmoil. Most people are familiar with stress management techniques but not all use them in practice; however, this is the time to the use of such techniques.
- **Accept feelings:** Being in a stressful situation can cause a lot of different emotional reactions like anger, frustration, anxiety, regrets, second-guessing yourself, self-blame etc. These feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

Contact Details

Occupational Health Service: _____

See <http://workwell.ie/contact-list/contact-your-local-occupational-health-service/>

GP Out of Hours: _____

Employee Assistance and Counselling Service Contact Details: _____

See <https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/employee-assistance-programme-contact-details-for-counsellors.pdf>

Further Information

Further information including frequently asked questions is available at the following link:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/>

Or you can contact the COVID-19 HCW helpdesk – **1850 420 420**
9am-6pm Mon-Fri;